new masses

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PRESIDENT TRUMAN:

What About Nazis on the U. S. Payroll?

▶ ▶ SEE PAGE 3

THOUGHT CONTROL IN OUR HISTORY

by

John Howard Lawson

HOWARD FAST REVIEWS "THE ROOSEVELT STORY"

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just a minute

ANNIVERSARIES, like the Joads, keep on a-comin'—and sometimes so fast and close together that they get lost in the shuffle. And we often have to repeat, when one gets by us, the well-worn slogan of the Dodger fans back in the days when their favorites really were bums: wait till next year. But while we've passed by a couple of weeks this particular milestone we do want to nail it down for the records. More rib-tickling than world-shaking, this event was the first anniversary of Bill Richard's "Portside Patter," NM's weekly column of pungent capsule comment, the first of which appeared in our August 13, 1946, issue.

For a long time we'd been wanting something like that. And while the world is filled with funny people, you'd be surprised—or maybe you wouldn't be—at how few are those who can be humorous in cold type. So when Bill showed up with a sample of his stuff we "grappled him to our soul with hoops of steel." Since then he hasn't missed an issue, though Lord knows he's been late enough with his copy many times. He is one of those blithe spirits to whom a deadline is some sort of a gag; he's a sort of editorial commuter who has to catch the last train on the fly.

"Portside's" pater is quite unlike the traditional comic who is always dour and dyspeptic in real life. Bill, a tall, handsome youth with an erect, military bearing which could not possibly be the result of his wartime service as a lieutenant in the Marine Corps (Pacific Theater), is quite the opposite of the stereotype. A soft-spoken, happy fellow, he always looks as though he's just polished off a bowl of wheaties. He has been honored by having his quips quoted in various other journals and has received the supreme tribute of his trade by being plagiarized. In fact, we ourselves have sparkled a couple of times at parties by ad-libbing a Bill Richards which hadn't yet been unveiled.

More power to you, Bill, but for God's sake remember that Thursday, 5 P.M. deadline for your copy—just one time.

A COUPLE of weeks ago we sounded off about low-flying airplanes that have been getting into our hair. Now we know that this is not a major issue before the world at this time and we wouldn't have said anything more about it—here anyway—if we hadn't run across a little item in the paper the other day about a fellow-sufferer at the other end of the line, in Sacramento, California. C. J. Carey is more the man of action than we. Mere griping or crying into his beer about his tormenters was not enough for Mr. Carey. According to an AP dispatch he submitted a formal request to the city council for permission to mount a 50-mm. anti-aircraft gun in his backyard—and for immunity if he should hit his target: low-flying, low-powered planes with high-powered advertising from high-powered microphones. It seems that the city council out there is quite as deaf to *vox populi* as was the 80th Congress: the request was denied. That's really going too far—buzzing a man's house with airborne commercials. What good does it do to turn the radio off? It's like that old song we used to sing: "Close the door, they're coming through the windows. . . ."

RECENTLY, in an idle and misdirected moment, we glanced through the column "Turns With a Bookworm," in the Sunday *Herald-Tribune* book review section. The writer was discussing people of the Left and concluded that they seem to have a "peculiar quirk of psychology, which must signify that the lowest possible condition for any one would be that of personal acquaintance with a Left-winger." Now then, all of you who have such an acquaintance can realize your plight. And the thought occurs to us that there's one thing you can do to elevate your status if you are unable or even unwilling to sever such an acquaintanceship. It's simple and readily apparent: become a Left-winger yourself. Of course we can think up better reasons for you to become an active member of the Left, reasons that are splashed daily on the *Trib's* front page and in the headlines of all the papers. But you know what they are. And while you're moving Leftward why not take your acquaintances along, and raise their level too? We can see the process snowballing—a big mass movement Left and up. Incidentally a good way to do that is to get your acquaintances to subscribe to NM, now. L. L. B.

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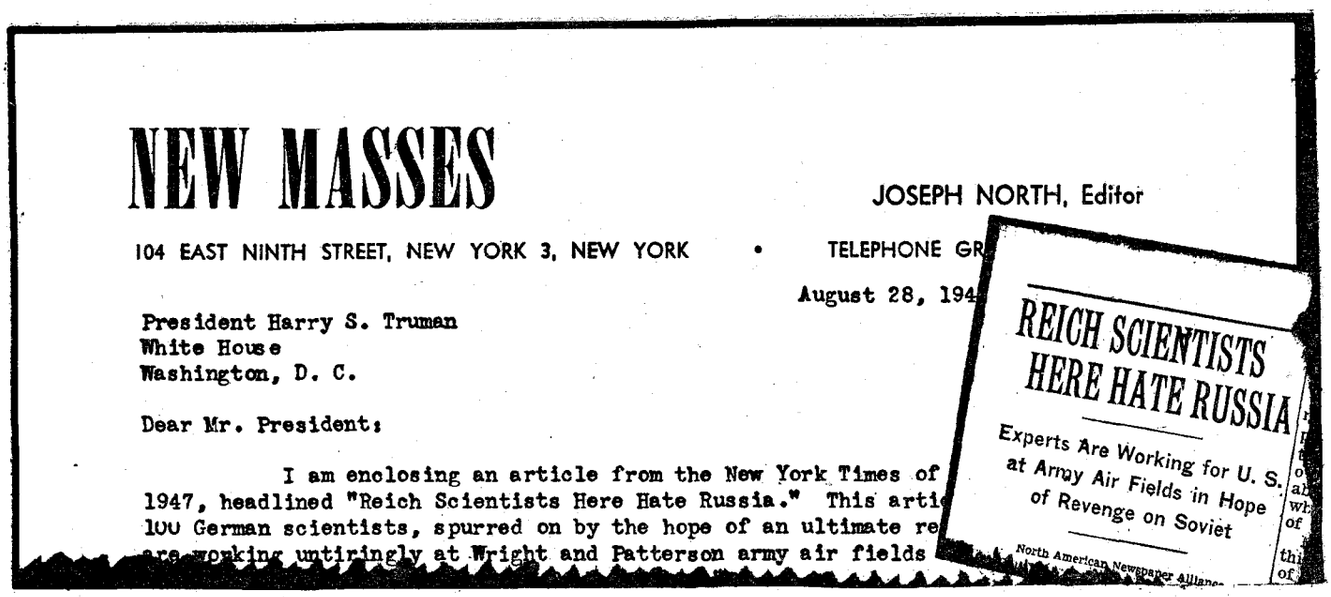

NEW MASSES

JOSEPH NORTH, Editor

104 EAST NINTH STREET, NEW YORK 3, NEW YORK • TELEPHONE GR

August 28, 194

President Harry S. Truman
White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I am enclosing an article from the New York Times of
1947, headlined "Reich Scientists Here Hate Russia." This arti
100 German scientists, spurred on by the hope of an ultimate re
are working untiringly at Wright and Patterson army air fields

REICH SCIENTISTS HERE HATE RUSSIA

Experts Are Working for U. S. at Army Air Fields in Hope of Revenge on Soviet

North American Newspaper Allian

DANGER! *Nazis at Work*

In a letter to President Truman, NEW MASSES *has asked that he order the immediate dismissal of German scientists employed by the armed forces. The letter points out that these men are threatening American national security and democratic institutions by continuing to pursue the Hitler objective of destroying the Soviet Union in a future war. Similar letters have been sent to Secretary of Defense James Forrestal and Attorney General Tom C. Clark. The full text of the letter to Truman, signed by A. B. Magil, executive editor, reads:*

I AM enclosing an article from the New York *Times* of Sunday, August 24, 1947, headlined "Reich Scientists Here Hate Russia." This article states: "Nearly 100 German scientists, spurred on by the hope of an ultimate revenge on Russia, are working untiringly at Wright and Patterson Army air fields to help the Army Air Forces plan its sky fleets of the future."

The article further states: "Officers who have talked with them have received various answers as to why they volunteered to leave the Reich for this country. The underlying thought in almost all their minds, however, the officers report, is that by their efforts the Soviets will one day be defeated—then perhaps they will go home."

The article also reports: "Under close surveillance when they were first brought to this country, the scientists now receive virtually complete freedom. . . . On the Army base they eat in cafeterias and shop in the PX's along with other personnel."

These and hundreds of other German scientists are here as part of a joint program launched about two years ago by the Departments of State, War and Navy. A joint State-Army-Navy release of September 13, 1946 declared: "It is emphasized that those found to be active Nazis, war criminals or suspected war criminals are arbitrarily eliminated from the entire program of utilizing Austro-German scientific knowledge and skill through a thorough screening first in Europe and again in the United States. . . ."

A similar statement appeared in a War Department release of December 4, 1946, which also said that "after a year of experiment and research," the German and Austrian scientists brought to this country "have proved themselves technically and morally to the satisfaction of the War Department."

It is clear that if the article in the New York *Times* is correct, these scientists, some of whom were members of the Nazi Party, have not abandoned the political convictions and aims which enabled them to serve the Hitler dictatorship so loyally. Their chief motivation in working for our government remains what it was when they worked for the Nazi government: to destroy the country which was our most powerful wartime ally, the USSR, and whose defeat would have meant the enslavement of all other nations, including our own, by the Nazi conquerors.

Though these scientists have a special status, they are civilian employes of the federal government, working under contract and paid out of federal funds. They therefore fall within the purview of your executive order of March 22, 1947, providing a so-called loyalty investigation of every federal government employe. Your executive order falsely lumps Communist with totalitarian, fascist and subversive organizations and is being used to oust anti-fascists who have demonstrated their loyalty to American democratic institutions.

What millions of Americans now want to know, however, is whether those persons who are genuinely disloyal and who constitute the real menace to our country, those fascists and subversives who are also included under the executive order, will be eliminated from government employment.

NEW MASSES magazine requests that you at once order the dismissal of all German and Austrian scientists who by continuing to work for Hitler's objectives threaten our national security and our democratic institutions.

We urge our readers to write the President, Forrestal and Clark demanding action against these Nazi agents on the government payroll.

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The History of Hue and Cry

America had its witch-hunters in colonial times, and its inquisitors under Alexander Hamilton. How privileged greed posed as law and order.

By JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

ERIC JOHNSTON, speaking recently before the Belgium-American Society in Brussels, assured his audience that Henry Wallace is giving a false impression of American foreign policy and the internal situation in the United States. According to press reports, Mr. Johnston said that "the spirit of imperialism simply does not exist in my country," and asked: "How can you call reactionary a nation so fanatical in its devotion to the ideal of individual liberties?"

One cannot disagree with the statement that we as a people hate imperialism and are devoted to the ideal of individual liberty. Yet Mr. Johnston's optimism, taken in the context of present American policy, seems to many of us, and must have seemed to many of his foreign listeners, a mockery of the ideals and beliefs to which the speaker declared his allegiance.

How does it happen that such common words as liberty and democracy —words which supposedly describe a common American heritage and belief —can be used today in such contradictory ways as to convert our civilization into a tower of Babel, a shining edifice whose builders can no longer understand each other? It is not merely a matter of semantics. It is our future that is being built; it is our house that is jeopardized by the confusion of tongues.

To a considerable extent, the problem is one of historical interpretation. The words that we use, and the beliefs that underlie these words, are derived from our experience as a nation and our understanding of that experience. It may therefore be of value to examine the points mentioned by Mr. Johnston—"the spirit of imperialism" and "the ideal of individual liberties" —in their relationship to the political and cultural development of our country. This may provide us with an overall pattern, a historical frame of reference, which will aid us in defining the forces that tend to control thought and enforce propaganda-stereotypes in contemporary American society.

The conflict between an expanding democratic culture and restrictive or repressive tendencies is as old as our history. It began with the settlement of Jamestown; it originated in England in the struggle between the Court Party and the Popular Party regarding the rights to be exercised under the Virginia charter.

Since the terms of the charter determined the form of colonial government, the struggle was transferred to Virginia, and shortly thereafter to New England. Even in the first year of the settlement of Massachusetts Bay, the outlying villages protested against the authoritarian regime in Boston; a few years later, the defenders of controlled thought scored a temporary triumph with the banishment of Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson and others, whose insistence on the right to speak was regarded as subversive.

But banishments did not solve the problem. Protests continued. Quakers defied the death penalty to visit Massachusetts Bay, and in the last decade of the seventeenth century the rulers of the colony organized a witch-hunt, which is distinguished from later events of a similar character in that the victims were frankly accused of being witches. American historiography has given us a one-sided impression of the New England witchcraft cases, treating them as a spontaneous outbreak of religious zeal and superstition. The stereotype concerning the Puritanical fanaticism of our New England ancestors is so generally accepted that it comes as something of a shock to discover that the majority of seventeenth-century New Englanders were not religious at all. Not one in five of the adult population of Massachusetts Bay were church members, even though those who did not join the church were deprived of the franchise.[1] It hardly seems reasonable to suppose that the four-fifths of the people who were not even church members were swept into a religious frenzy by the charge that their neighbors were possessed of devils.

AN EXAMINATION of the political situation at the end of the seventeenth century throws considerable light on Cotton Mather's sudden outcry against witches. The coming of William and Mary to the throne of England and the adoption of the English Bill of Rights in 1689 caused a democratic ferment throughout the colonies. In New York, shopkeepers, craftsmen and small farmers seized the government under the leadership of Jacob Leisler; the wealthy landholders fled from New York and a Committee of Safety was elected in the first genuinely democratic election ever held on the American continent. The Leisler revolution had an exhilarating effect upon the other colonies; delegates from Massachusetts went to New York to attend the first intercolonial congress, called by Leisler in 1690. The forces that would eventually lead to colonial unity and independence were already in motion.

The situation was tense in Massachusetts. The people suffered seriously from the economic dislocations brought about by the war with France. Popular pressure was responsible for the granting of a new charter in 1691, substituting a property qualification for the religious qualifications that had formerly determined the franchise. But the people were not satisfied with this partial victory. The first newspaper printed in the United States appeared in Boston in 1690, and was promptly suppressed, with a statement of "high resentment and disallowance" from the governor and council.[2] The first governor under the New Charter, Sir William Phips, was under the influence of the theocracy, which was de-

[1] THE FOUNDING OF NEW ENGLAND, *by James Truslow Adams*, p. 121.

[2] FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN MASSACHUSETTS, *by Clyde Augustus Duniway*, p. 69.

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termined not to relinquish its power.

The trials and executions of witches were designed to consolidate the theocratic control, dramatize the danger of heresy and divert public attention from political issues. The course of the witchcraft cases parallels the political struggle beginning in 1688 and reaching a climax with the introduction of the new charter in 1692. By this time, the power of the theocracy was seriously undermined, and drastic measures were required to reinforce the authority of the ruling clergy. Within a short time in 1692, two hundred persons were accused. Of these one hundred and fifty were imprisoned, nineteen were hanged and one pressed to death. Far from being a matter of public hysteria, the popular opposition was so strong that on several occasions it was necessary to call out the militia to prevent angry crowds from rescuing the victims. As the opposition grew and became organized, the whole scheme of persecution was abandoned. Its abandonment was a decisive political defeat for the theocracy, and marked the end of its power. It also was a milestone on the road to the American Revolution.

The witchcraft trials, like later attempts at legal suppression, were accompanied by an elaborate propaganda, designed to silence opposition and justify the unusual court procedure. In order to prove that there was actually what he described as a "stupendous growth of *witches* among us,"[3] Cotton Mather had to construct a theoretical base: he had to show that devils habitually enter human bodies and control the actions and words of the unfortunate persons who are thus possessed. He denounced Sadducees; the term was applied to anyone who refused to believe in witches. "No man but a Sadducee," he thundered, "doubts of the ill will of devils."[4] Rigid censorship of the press prevented the Sadducees from communicating their doubts. But the common sense of the people triumphed over the propaganda. It turned out that the great majority of them were Sadducees. They were not afraid to doubt authority, or to test the truth by their own experience.

LET us move across the years to another crisis in American history —another witch-hunt, which occurred almost a century later when the young republic was attempting to protect and extend its newly-won freedom. At the end of the eighteenth century the wholesale suppression of free speech under the Alien and Sedition laws was accompanied by a propaganda campaign as fantastic as Cotton Mather's denunciation of witches. In this case the Sadducees were allegedly members of an organization called the "Order of the Illuminati." The international campaign against the Illuminati is of special interest because it is the foundation upon which has been built the

whole structure of nineteenth and twentieth century propaganda justifying the suppression of free communication and control of "dangerous thoughts." A careful study of the accusations against the Illuminati is essential for those who would understand the mechanism of the witch-hunt.

Democratic aspirations stirred the peoples of the world in the years following the American and French Revolutions. The rulers of the British Empire and the monarchs of Europe knew that their thrones were insecure. The old structure of power and privilege was crumbling. In 1797, a book written by John Robison was published in Edinburgh. It charged that all the woes of the world were due to the pernicious influence of the Illuminati. According to Robison, the Illuminati circulated "doctrines subversive of all notions of morality—of all confidence in the moral order of the universe . . . *An association has been formed* for the express purpose of *rooting out all the religious establishments, and overturning all the existing governments of Europe.*"[5] It was asserted that this association was connected with the Free Masons, and functioned through Masonic Lodges.

There really was a society of the Illuminati. It was formed in Bavaria in 1776, devoted to moral and intellectual improvement; its membership included Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, the philosopher Herder, the poet Goethe, the educator Pestalozzi. One need hardly point out that the only crime of which these individuals might be guilty was a penchant for rational speculation and the application of science and philosophy to social problems. However, the American Federalists, closely allied with British reaction, seized upon the yarn about the Illuminati as proof that the Jeffersonian political clubs were part of a world conspiracy to destroy all morality and religion. Robison's book was rushed to America and printed simultaneously in New York and Philadelphia; the Philadelphia edition was manufactured and on the market in the unbelievably short time of three weeks. Another similar book about the Illuminati, by Augustin Barruel, was published at New York, Hartford and Elizabethtown, N. J.

The flood-gates of propaganda were let loose. Sermons, leaflets, hysterical appeals swept the country. While William Cobbett denounced the Jeffersonians as "frog-eating, man-eating, blood-drinking cannibals,"[6] the Reverend Jedediah Moore preached a sermon, which was immediately printed, in which he described the Illuminati as approving of promiscuous intercourse between the sexes, condemning the principles of patriotism and the right to accumulate private property; he said the Illuminati were seeking to get control of cultural agencies, schools, literary societies, newspapers, writers, booksellers and postmasters; they were bent on insinuating their members into all positions of distinction and influence, whether literary, civil or religious.[7] Shortly afterward, on July 4, 1798, Timothy Dwight, President of Yale University, preached a sermon on "The Duty of Americans in the Present Crisis," repeating all the charges against the Illuminati, tracing their pernicious philosophy to Voltaire and the French Encyclopedists: "In these hotbeds were sown the seeds of that astonishing revolution, and all its dreadful appen-

[3] THE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD, *by Cotton Mather*, p. 97.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 237.

[5] NEW ENGLAND AND THE BAVARIAN ILLUMINATI, *by Vernon Stauffer*, pp. 202-203.

[6] JACOBIN AND JUNTO, *by Charles Warren*, p. 90.

[7] Stauffer, *opus cit.*, p. 234.

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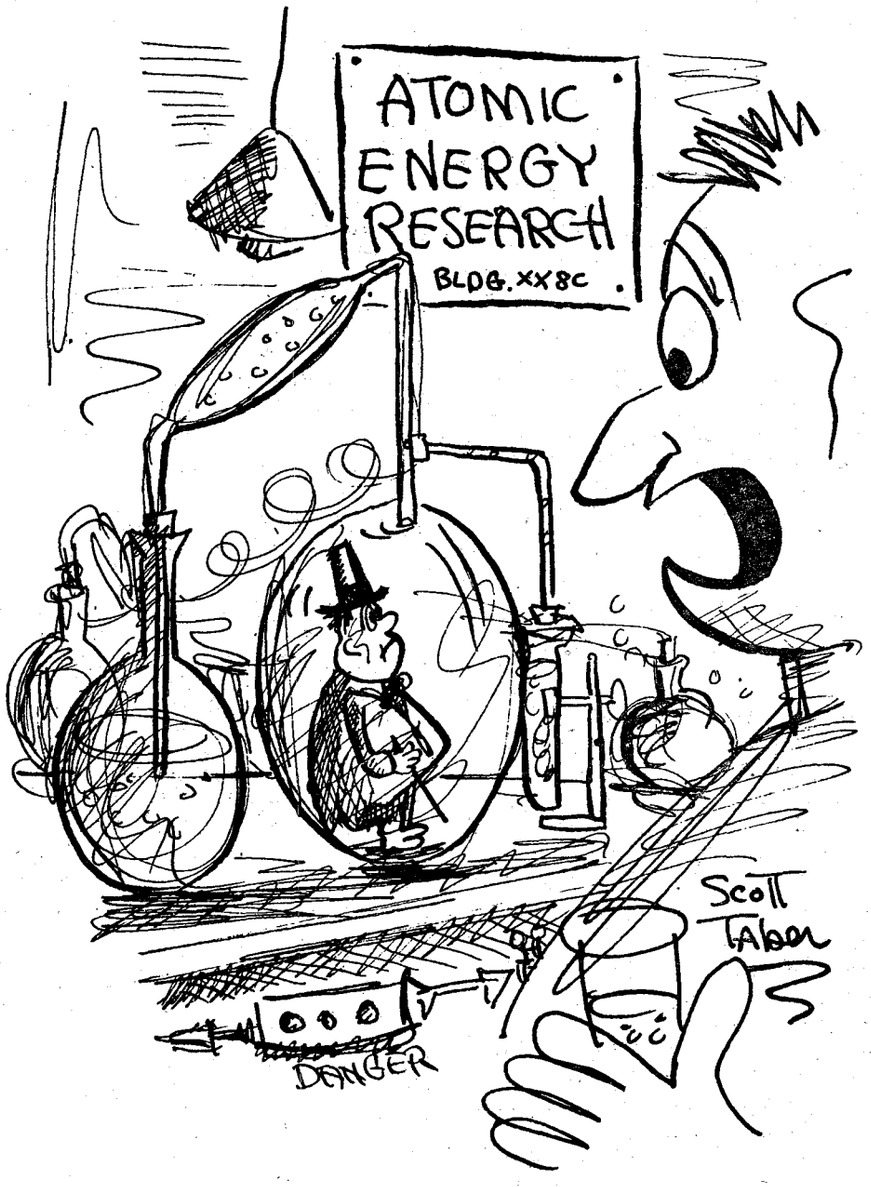
dages, which now spreads dismay and horror throughout the globe."[8]

The scope and force of the social pressure that was exerted in support of these absurdities may be judged from the fact that even George Washington was involved. When the Reverend G. W. Snyder sent Washington a copy of Robison's book, the President replied that he had heard about the "nefarious and dangerous plan and doctrines of the Illuminati," but that he hardly believed that Masonic Lodges in the United States were contaminated. Snyder addressed him angrily, saying that he was surprised that Washington took the danger so lightly. Washington felt constrained to reply that he had not intended to give the impression "that the doctrines of the Illuminati and the principles of Jacobinism had not spread in the United States."[9]

In spite of this high-pressure campaign, and in spite of the reign of terror, the suppression of newspapers and the arrest of editors under the Alien and Sedition laws, the good sense and democratic will of the American people triumphed. The Illuminati scare failed; the discredited Federalists disappeared from the American political scene.

IT IS not sufficient merely to smile at the imbecilities of the Illuminati campaign. We must ask a further question: what were the social forces that directed the campaign? What interests were served by the monstrous distortion of truth?

The Hamiltonian party was engaged in an attempt to exploit and degrade the people which could be successful only through the destruction of the democratic process. The propaganda went to extremes because the political purpose also went to extremes. American historiography has given a one-sided and misleading impression of the struggle between Jefferson and Hamilton, and has thus concealed the issues that were at stake. A historical stereotype is substituted for the complex reality. We are told that although Hamilton and Jefferson were diametrically opposed to each other, they were somehow both right. According to James Truslow Adams, "Without Jefferson the new nation might have lost its soul. Without Hamilton it would assuredly have been killed in body."[10] Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commanger use almost identical phraseology: "Hamilton's aim was to give the country a more efficient organization. Jefferson's great aim was to give individual men a wider liberty. The United States needed both influences."[11]



"Good grief, Senator—I told you not to touch!"

This is an assertion that the nation needed democracy, but it also needed its opposite—dictatorship by a financial oligarchy, which Hamilton openly advocated. We can recognize Hamilton's brilliance, the fascinating contradictions in his personality and conduct; but this need not lead us to misunderstand or condone his policies. When the farmers of western Pennsylvania rebelled against the discriminatory taxes that deprived them of the means of livelihood, Hamilton personally led the army against the rebels, and brought back his prisoners to march in captivity through the streets of Philadelphia. These men placed on exhibition as captives were frontiersmen, tillers of the soil, men who loved independence and had fought in the Revolution; they bowed their heads in shame as they were led through the streets.[12] It was the climax of Hamilton's power. It was also the guarantee of his doom.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 249.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 342.
[10] HAMILTONIAN PRINCIPLES, p. XVII.
[11] POCKET HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, p. 147.
[12] JEFFERSON AND HAMILTON, *by Claude Bowers, p. 256.*

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The American people were "fanatical," to use Eric Johnston's term, about their newly-won liberties. After that march of captive frontiersmen and veterans through the Philadelphia streets it seemed as if there could be no question that the issue was joined; there was a clear choice between democracy and suppression. But there were many men at that time who talked of liberty and advocated suppression. The question of human rights was also a question of wages and taxes, homes and living standards. And it was at the same time an urgent question of foreign policy.

AMERICAN historical thought has tended to assume that, at least as far as the past is concerned, internal problems have no connection with foreign policy, and that our geographical isolation has kept us from being involved in European and world events. The study of our history does not support this assumption, but rather indicates that we have moved in a web of world relationships from our beginnings as a nation—and, indeed, from the first days of colonial settlement. Furthermore, domestic policy has always interacted upon and determined foreign policy. Attempts at exploitation and the impoverishment of the people have invariably been accompanied by a foreign policy contrary to the nation's welfare and the interests of the people. Hamilton's plan for vesting power in the hands of a financial oligarchy necessarily involved subservience to England and abandonment of many of the privileges of trade and commerce achieved through the Revolution. In order to exploit American resources, Hamilton and his friends had to mortgage the nation and its liberties to the British Empire.

Hamilton's subservience to England brought him tragically close to treason when he conveyed secret information to the British government at a crucial point in the English negotiations with John Jay in 1794. Hamilton bears a measure of responsibility for the dangerous concessions which the United States accepted in the Jay treaty—concessions which prepared the way for the war of 1812.

Hamilton's conduct also verged on treason when he entered into secret correspondence with the Latin-American adventurer Francesco do Miranda, discussing grandiose schemes for South American conquest. Without the knowledge of the President, John Adams, or of George Washington, Hamilton encouraged Miranda to seek English aid for an American seizure of Florida and Cuba. "Through all this period," as Bowers observes, "Hamilton had visions of himself on horseback, at the head of troops in South America, with England as an ally."[13]

Thus imperialism was an urgent question even at this early stage of our history. The men who wished to exploit and degrade the American people also dreamed of foreign aggression and the exploitation of subject populations. The program was a betrayal of democracy. It was also a betrayal of our national interest; instead of the development of free commerce which Jefferson advocated, we would enter upon military adventures which would necessarily require English financial aid.

At the height of the Illuminati campaign in 1798, the traitor Benedict Arnold wrote that he rejoiced "to hear that so many of my countrymen have shaken off their delusion, as I predicted they would eighteen years ago."[14] Benedict Arnold was wrong about the people whom he dared to refer to as his countrymen. They had not shaken off their preference for liberty. But he was right in recognizing that there was a link between his own offer to sell West Point to England during the war and the attempt of the Federalists to abandon the achievements of the Revolution and return to a semi-colonial status.

It is to Hamilton's credit that he accepted the popular verdict, retiring from public life with the bitter comment: "Every day proves to me more and more that this American world is not for me."[15]

But the forces that Hamilton represented were not eliminated from our national life. The remnants of the Federalist party moved to actual treason in the Hartford Convention in 1814. Greed and privilege assumed new forms, achieved new positions of power.

To be continued in our next two issues. Mr. Lawson's article was one of the papers read at a recent conference against thought control held in Hollywood, July 9 to 13, under the sponsorship of the Progressive Citizens of America. We are publishing it through the courtesy of the PCA.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 428.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 372.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 510.

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

News Item: The controversy over long skirts reaches nation-wide proportions.

Determined opposition to long skirts is forming despite the staunch advocates of these stylish shrouds. Among the latter group are the realists who claim that the longer skirts do well to conceal a multitude of pins. Still others are listed among the fatalists who observe with a shrug that women's skirts have been going up and down for years.

The business crowd point out that the drooping gives the dress market a lift. After all, until recently skirts were getting shorter and shorter until the bottom was ready to drop out. There are many who feel that to make a profit dress manufacturers and designers will go to any lengths. However, the new style dress does make for slimmer figures—not so much in the dress as in the bank.

Perhaps the chief sufferers are the connoisseurs of feminine pulchritude whose enthusiastic whistles must now be accompanied by such uninspiring exclamations as "What a nifty pair of ankles!"

It is not a matter to be taken lightly. Men in the subways will be reduced to the grim level of reading their tabloids. And gone are the delights that would ordinarily accompany the Spring and Autumn breezes. 'Tis an ill wind that blows for no good.

It remained for the poet laureate of a midtown drug store to give stature to the controversy with the following deathless epic:

For the gals who sport the knobby knees
A lower hem is sure to please.
For the gals whose legs are bowed and bent
The latest style is heaven-sent.
But what of those whose gams are great
Who use them oft' as hunting bait?
They're the ones who are being hurt
By fashion's ordered longer skirt.

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THE ROOSEVELT STORY

by Howard Fast

It is hard to ask yourself, when you sit and look at *The Roosevelt Story*, whether this is a good or a bad picture, cinematographically speaking—anymore than you can open a family album of your life and the lives of those you love and have loved, and ask yourself whether it is good or bad from an artistic point of view. For here was a man who wove himself so closely and so completely into our very being that he became a part of us. Watching this cumbersome, often amateurish, yet always warm and understanding picture unfold, I wept unashamedly, and those around me wept too.

This was my President. I voted for no other President, I knew no other President, and this was also the man Roosevelt, whose heart, in some incredible way, contained a part of all the aspirations and hope that was in my own. His life was my own life, as well as the lives of a hundred and forty million more, and now he is dead—and all that he stood for and fought for and lived for and died for is being washed away in the blood of Greek and Chinese and Spanish patriots. That went through my mind as I watched, and after a while I stopped caring that it was by no means the best picture in the world. It was Roosevelt.

The method used by Martin Levine and Oliver Unger, who produced the picture, and by Lawrence and Walter Klee, who wrote and compiled it, is a fairly simple one. Beginning with that funeral, when the whole world wept, they go back and trace Franklin Delano Roosevelt's career, putting together stills, newsreels and family shots, until the picture of a man in the course of a lifetime of action emerges. Along with that, out of necessity, the history of a decade is touched upon; and in the end the caisson which bore all that was mortal of him is still making its slow and melancholy way up Pennsylvania Avenue. It ends with that, with the flag that covered his coffin—but as the narrator points out, when a man is so deeply enshrined in the hearts of so many he does not die.

The picture is something that must be seen, that you and all your friends must see and talk about. We have few more precious possessions in our heritage than the achievements won under Roosevelt, yet those who sit in his place now would seek to destroy even the memory of him, to blacken his name and make us doubt that such a man was ever with us. This is not the last Roosevelt picture, or the last telling of the Roosevelt story, not by any means; but it is the first, and those of us who loved him then and still love him owe it to ourselves and our country to fight for this picture, for its life and its success.

As I said before, one could wish that there was more in this picture. Not even all the pages of the family album were opened, and the story of the man, in the fullest sense of a man, remains to be told. Also, there is a concept of Roosevelt as the single-handed savior of mankind that must be challenged—and, indeed, he himself would have been the first to challenge it.

If there was one virtue Franklin Delano Roosevelt had above all others, if there was one thing he shared in common with those great Americans who came before him, it was a superb sensitivity to the will and the needs and the aspirations of the American people; a sensitivity, by the way, which his successor in the White House appears to lack entirely. The success of Roosevelt lay not in his being a superman, a dictator, a God-chosen leader, but in his ability to become one with the people—and to respond to them, despite occasional mistakes and bad compromises. It was in the time of Roosevelt that the greatest struggles of American labor were fought; it was not that Roosevelt led labor but rather that the labor movement by dint of its own strength and purpose led him to an understanding of what organized labor means to a free democracy. And in much the same way, on issue after issue, the people of America showed Roosevelt the direction he must travel and supported him once he had embarked in that direction. That is why they returned him to the White House time after time; that is why they loved him as no other President in our times has been loved—and that is why the rich, the powerful, the men of the trusts, hated him and mistrusted him so.

It was said of Roosevelt, so aptly, that only the people were for him. He understood well that its people is any nation's most precious possession—and in serving America he served the American people. But this is only hinted at in *The Roosevelt Story*.

The picture could have been a better one; but even as it is it remains a fine and beautiful memory of the man. We must come to understand that unless he lives, our own lives will be forfeit. We must understand that this is not only a memory but a heritage precious above most things. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was alive, most of him belonged to us. Now that he is dead, all of him belongs to us.

Very few Hollywood pictures are so conceived and so made as to take in mind the needs of the people. This one was. I think it would not be too much to say that all America owes a debt to the producers. They have rendered us a very great service, and we must give back to them a full measure of support.

It should be noted that in the one scene where Roosevelt and Wallace are seen together, the theater rocked with applause. Some may put this down to New York, but I wonder whether much the same will not be the case throughout the country?

The music was written by Earl Robinson, a fine and moving score. Kenneth Lynch, Canada Lee, Ed Begley, Kelly Flint and Gene Blakely shared the narration, and both Harry Brandt and Elliott Roosevelt participated in the production. To all of them, a large measure of credit is due.

"The services of democracy must be something much more than mere lip service. It is a living thing—a human thing—compounded of brains and muscles—and heart and soul. The service of democracy is the birthright of every citizen, the white and the colored; the Protestant, the Catholic, the Jew; the sons and daughters of every country in the world, who make up the people of this land. Democracy is every man . . . and woman who loves freedom and serves the cause of freedom . . . Democracy is still the hope of the world!"

—From a speech by FDR.

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His Heart Belongs to AM ~~NLRB~~

Washington.

Robert Denham, counsel for the new board, rates tops on big business' hit parade.

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

LABOR circles here are getting just a small taste of what the National Labor Relations Board is going to be like now that it is being converted into a bucket shop. All that used to be said by the fascist hacks and sober solid reactionaries about collusion between the old board and unions can now be applied, but with truth, to the board and employers. If there were nothing else to indicate it, and there is, it is enough that the new general counsel, Robert W. Denham, was sponsored and pushed by Gerard D. Reilly and, it is figured here, will be veritable putty in his hands.

This latest member of the Missouri gang, the sixty-two-year-old Denham, is an amiable and comfortable and somewhat bumbling St. Louisan and University of Missouri graduate, one of the homey creatures the President likes to surround himself with. Without accusing Mr. Denham of anything but a good heart, where solid interests are concerned, it is safe to predict that when it gets around that "Gerry" Reilly has a direct pipeline to the board, stocks of "Gerry's" clients, which now include the Chase National Bank, will zoom by leaps and bounds. Mr. Reilly, whom NEW MASSES exposed at some length when he still was a member of the NLRB, was for a time on the payroll of the Senate Education and Labor Committee under Sen. Robert A. Taft's chairmanship, and helped author the Taft-Hartley Act. Though no longer connected with the committee Reilly attended a hush-hush meeting on July 28 of Sen. Joseph H. Ball (R., Minn.), Rep. Hartley, NLRB members James J. Reynolds and John M. Houston and Denham.

Asked about that "alleged secret meeting with Sen. Ball and Rep. Hartley," Mr. Denham told me, "There never was any secret meeting." There was, he said, a meeting of "the entire joint committee," *i. e.*, the Joint Congressional Committee on the Taft-Hartley Act. Was this, I asked, the meeting at which Sen. Ball had a list of seventy questions on administration and practices of the board? (*Federated Press*, which broke the story August 8, said: "The list had been prepared within the NLRB and 'leaked' to the Senator.")

"No, my dear," said Denham comfortably, "that was a list I had prepared for our internal use. It was batted around here and the boys wrote down all these questions, and a copy somehow got into Sen. Ball's hands."

Asked if the President had "called you in and smacked you down," as reported, when he heard about the meeting, Mr. Denham said stiffly that he never commented on talks with the President. The President reportedly reminded him sharply that he was not working for Sen. Ball and Rep. Hartley, but was responsible to the White House. This was on the occasion when he called in Denham and new board members to receive interim appointments, Congress having failed to approve the appointment of Denham despite his efforts to please both the Joint Committee and the White House.

Denham may have been Reilly's favorite trial examiner when Reilly was on the board, as reputed, but during his eight years as trial examiner he was reversed more than any other examiner, labor experts say.

"I was under the impression that you said publicly you had been reversed by the board only once, and that you later said it was only twice," I asked Mr. Denham. "I wondered if you had had a chance to check that and if you found you had been reversed as a matter of fact eight times."

"Now, I'm not going into that," Denham said cheerfully. "The board at times reversed me on minor points, and others were not. I haven't checked it, no, and I'm not going to."

Nevertheless, Denham was at least once rebuked by a court for being biased, and in another case, that of Firestone Rubber, the board set aside the entire case after counsel for the board filed a motion to disqualify him. This was a case involving Local 90 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and Denham as examiner had asked to see a document on the credit rating of a union member who was seeking reinstatement. The company did not want to introduce it as evidence, whereupon Denham asked to take a look at it and commented on it adversely for the record although it was not in evidence.

That Denham's easy-going ways are only on the surface is indicated by his having already begun what amounts to a Red hunt among the considerably cowed employes of the board. In addition, he said at a meeting of employes that he would demand that they be loyal to the Taft-Hartley Act, although he had admitted he was not in sympathy with the old Wagner Act and in fact supplied Sen. Donnell (R., Mo.) with a memorandum of suggested changes in the act. But he went even further and hinted to the employes that he would demand personal loyalty.

IT IS obvious by now that the Taft-Hartley Act has released all the reactionary and fascist elements and given them hope and comfort. Employers now feel free really to try to do a job on unions. The NAM line is to keep sweet and not provoke strikes until the depression is more than a dry depression, hidden as it is now in a sort of delayed terror, with the workers bankrupt of savings and unable to do more than exist, but still working. Just the same there are some employers who are taking the risk of strikes, reluctantly, but nevertheless unable to avoid taking the risk in their consuming desire to break the unions in their plants.

A considerable number of employers are cleverly trading off union security for wage increases, and the phonies in union leadership are falling

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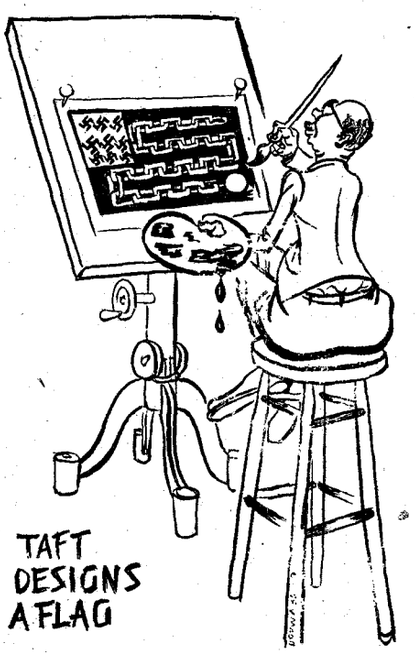
for it because they are afraid of the rank-and-file, afraid of really building their unions. Others are saying, in effect, "Forget about the wage increases. I'll renew your contract, I'll give you the union shop. We'll forget about the Taft-Hartley law, and you can still have the union shop—so why haggle about wage increases?"

Many people in the leadership of unions have failed to see what is happening under the Taft-Hartley Act. They have become divorced from the rank-and-file in the long period under the late President Roosevelt when there was a sort of benevolent intervention by government to protect the rights of workers. Many are still living in a dream world and haven't yet realized that this is different, and that unless they mobilize the workers to fight for their rights they are turning them over to a reactionary government to deliver to the employers. This is particularly true of Social Democratic labor leaders like David Dubinsky of the AFL and Emil Rieve of the CIO, who are breaking the union front by capitulating to the act. Both the AFL and CIO have recommended that their affiliates do not sign no-strike pledges. But Rieve's Textile Workers, concentrating on getting immunity from damage suits, announced it is signing no-strike clauses but declaring that it can't be held responsible unless an international office gives written permission to strike.

Of course many leaders do recognize the realities of the day, understand what it means when scab foremen in Detroit recently brandished rifles against CIO pickets at a Ford agency, and Gov. Kim Sigler of Michigan called out state troopers in Dowagiac, Mich. to "crack down" on pickets at the struck Heddon Bait Co. In Chicago, Samuel Levin, state CIO head, told the Illinois CIO convention as it opened on the day the Taft-Hartley bill went into effect, August 22, that labor could not rely on government agencies any longer, but only on its own fighting strength. "Labor was not built by agencies; it was built by struggle and sacrifices," he declared. Today, when "American government becomes government by injunction," what is needed is unity within the CIO and unity for the entire labor movement, he pleaded.

HERE in Washington there is great speculation as to whether the AFL will decide at its executive board meeting in September to comply with the act, and register and file non-Communist affidavits. And despite the CIO board's having met and passed a strong statement that the new law destroys the Wagner Act and converts it into an instrument of oppression against workers' rights, there are pressures within the CIO on behalf of surrender, too. There is no guarantee that at a forthcoming meeting of vice-presidents they will not adopt a decision to file and register, and let the individual unions do what they like. This of course would delight Denham, the employers and those AFL leaders who hope to see individual CIO unions weakened by lack of support from the others, so that such AFL leaders may go in for a little raiding.

Denham is doing all he can to threaten and coerce unions into compliance by making it easy for a raiding union to do business with the employer. It was freely admitted at the board, when I sought information, what Denham will decide in the 410 elections which are pending under the old law, though he hasn't announced it yet. This will be that even though a union won an election before the August 22 deadline the board will not certify it unless the registration and anti-Communist affidavits have been completed. (That was the way it was alluded to; they didn't even use the polite term "non-Communist.") In the 195 old cases alleging "employer unfair labor practices," said my informant—under the old law all unfair labor practices were employers', but this is no longer the case—Mr. Denham doesn't know what his decision will be. But the unions should know.



Davis (Seattle "Artists for Action").

What is not appreciated is that the old board did little or nothing in its waning days, acting as have so many Washington agencies, anticipating Congressional legislation. The 600 cases pending in the national office have all been through the regions. There are in addition 3,000 cases pending in the field. For some time, actually, the board has refrained from certifying unions in many cases even when they have clearly won elections. The United Electrical Workers, after a bitter strike at the RCA plant in Pulaski, Va., a newly-organized plant where police and guardsmen were out in force against the workers, won an overwhelming victory—800 to 3—as against the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The board didn't certify UE, but this did not matter. Having shown its strength, the union got a national contract affecting 11,000 employes.

But at the Qualm-Nichols company in Chicago, where the UE had won a previous election which the company and the IBEW had appealed, and which the board had stalled on, a new consent election finally held the last week of the board's existence ended in a tie. Under the old law a run-off would have been ordered by the regional director, but he has now asked Washington for instructions.

Incidentally, the UE has taken the position that the board is not to be used because it is purely a union-busting weapon which, among other things, wouldn't hesitate to put a company union on a ballot.

At its July 2 meeting the UE general executive board, following in the footsteps of the national CIO, decided that UE policy would be "to submit no issue to the determination of the Taft-Hartley board" as it would be the equivalent of stepping "among the snares and pitfalls that the NAM authors of the law have spread."

The UE has negotiated no-strike clauses in some contracts, but on the basis that it pledges not to strike so long as all existing machinery to settle grievances has not been exhausted. This conforms to good trade-union practice, as no strike is entered into under such practice except as a last resort. In the RCA contract this was accompanied by a pledge from the employer not to resort to either the courts or the NLRB.

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THREE POEMS by Eleanor Mabry

The Night Those Men Died in the Chair

The night those men died in the chair
I was so young and unaware
of death, I felt no pain;
but there was a tremor in the air
and something stirring at my hair.
Like the young foal within the yard
the stallion father dies to guard,
I smelled the blood and trembled there;
not afraid, not woeful, but all astare
at the terrible battle.

Mighty the breast that took the shock
in Sacco; and in Peter the Rock,
the fisherman Vanzetti.
The wolves (flung back till the herd was strong,
its numbers gathered against the wrong)
fell back before the raging mares.
How strange the smell of blood, and to see
the titan lying less than me
in height; all glory on the trampled earth,
bled to the death.

The slinking wolves, their eyes like fire
on dead fish, lurked on the edge of the wood.
And as I peered past the mares who stood
between the small ones and the slavering death,
I felt an echo cramping my throat
of the stallion's last dying note,
the battle shriek;
untried and small, I heard the call.

Peter was sent us as a sign.
And the cock crows thrice;
one answer, mine.

Retreating Myth

The paper sharpness of light on that cold water
flings into ice; now Roger Bacon stands
like a monolith against the sea of myth,
enshadowed but pointing. Frozen now the hands
that gave us the whole of method; closed the eyes
that saw through the habitual feudal lies,
through and beyond: closed with the lids of stone.

From that receding sea a tidal heave
lifts; from those dead waters swells high moan:
the danger is not dead. Patient as rot,
the sea sucks at the timbers of the human house
with a glutting sound; first with the whisper of a mouse,
then with engulfing greed as it feels its power.

But we have the method still; let us use his means
and set ourselves against the deathward will
of this murderous darkness. Let us illumine the unknown
by the light of common knowledge; raise up a wall
of facts, interlocking stones. Against the high sea
with its shattering mouth a glitter of darkness and doom
to smother us, let us set ourselves. Hands clasped
to link us, human to human, around the earth
before we are grasped and devoured, let us stand.

This blindworm and that, this limpet, that snail on the beach
in scrabbling confusion and fear falls within the long reach;
not thus mature human, heeled in on locked pilings of fact:
the sands of myth surrender the grovellers there
even as they kneel; even as they wail and beseech
with futile yammer, the wave drowns out all their vain
clamor
in a yelling of waters and winds.

Of Repose

Why haven Heaven?
Why sleep so still?
Why mortify the will?

How grisly they go
who in summery sun dream snow.
The spirit moves enfleshed;
but coldly they burn
for solitude, for separate cells and palls,
for surcease and for lull,
for chill, for still,
for cold;
for the cold return.
The spirit moves enfleshed from the embryo's leap;
but these undead creep.
Then, doddering babies, dodder into sleep.
Not rocked in the web of life but crooned to dust;
stiff, desiccated, dry as dolls;
the raddled must
of a withered branch in fungus.

The lean bones down shall lie,
not clack across the sky;
we are of the earth earthen.
This puppet show of bones, this gothic death,
is unknown to birds, who sing with life's long breath
and (flocking grace-notes, tapestries of life)
take each a husband or a little wife
and show life forth.

Each hen the favor begs with coy pretence
then nestless the clutch of eggs;
and believe, when wild chicks feather
they seldom ponder whether;
who cannot fly today will fly tomorrow.

All healthy being knows
storm center holds repose.

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"What Am I Supposed To Do?"

The Negro vet's organization tries to find an answer for Al Peters, whose life is living death.

By VIVIAN HOWARD

"THEY grant amnesties to Nazis," the young Negro said, "but not to guys like me. I admit I made a mistake, but didn't I pay for it with a year in jail? What am I supposed to do now? I can't go back to law school, and I can't get a job—not with that dishonorable discharge trailing after me. I can't support my wife and child. I have to take a handout from my family, like a kid. . . ."

Al Peters was twenty-five, slight in build, but with old-looking eyes. The place was in Harlem, the New York State office of the United Negro and Allied Veterans of America. Catherine Overton, the organization's service officer, had told me a little about Al.

"You have a talk with him," she said, "if you want to get an idea of some of the problems we handle here. Sometimes I think dishonorable discharges were handed out wholesale to Negro soldiers. Al is hardly what you'd call a criminal type. He was a college student and a good musician; he volunteered for the Marines; he had a fine three-years' record. But let him tell you about it himself."

Al looked straight at me. "You can't use my real name," he said, a little belligerently.

I promised that I wouldn't. I told him that I'd change a few places around too so that his story wouldn't be recognized. Nobody likes to flaunt a d.d. It took a lot of pride-swallowing for Al to come up to the veterans' organization at all and ask them to fight his case.

"Where shall I start?" he asked.

"Right at the beginning—when you enlisted."

"I was taking a pre-law course at NYU," Al said. "My parents were staking me to an education, and I made some money working weekends for the railroad. Naturally a lot of the fellows were leaving college to join up. Along with the others I received a notice from the Naval Air Cadets asking for volunteers. Well, I applied. When I was called up for an interview, they let me hang around until there was nobody else there. I guess it took them all day to figure out what to tell me. Finally an officer called me in and said, 'Sorry, we have no provision for training Negroes as air cadets.' I went back to school, but some time later the Marine Corps changed its policy and decided it would accept Negroes. I wanted to be a Marine. . . . I had special ideas of how Negro Marines would fight the war. I went in along with one of the first batches of volunteers."

Al smiled a little. "They sure tried to pick the cream of the crop. We had lawyers, teachers, ministers, college students. They sent us down to an all-Negro camp in North Carolina; all Negro, that is, except the officers. They were white. I got to be a sergeant before I was busted. It was rugged in camp, but the Marines are supposed to be tough, and we expected it. The officers called us 'Mrs. Roosevelt's boys.' One day there was a review before a lot of big brass, and a general came out and made a speech. He said that this was the first time he realized a war was on—when he saw Negroes wearing the uniform of the US Marines. I don't know how he expected us to react, but we booed him. We were plenty tough too.

"I WAS trained for a 90-millimeter gun crew," Al continued. "I played in the band and had two stripes and felt pretty good. Then groups of men started shipping out as stevedore gangs. These were the foul balls, the guys who couldn't get along in camp. Nobody thought much about it, but this settled down to a routine, once a month, and after a while the men who were being shipped weren't foul balls anymore; they were the guys who'd been trained for gun crews.

"I was sent with a stevedore group—a depot battalion, we were called—to work in Boston. I was a sergeant then, second in command of the group. We lived on subsistence—boarded in homes. First I worked in the office, but once I reported fifteen minutes late and was busted. After that I worked with the men, loading trucks. This was the same bunch of lawyers, teachers, ministers and college students who'd rushed to join the Marines as soon as the color bar was let down. Only of course now we realized it didn't go all the way; it just slipped a little.

"Most of us were fed up," Al went on. "The captain asked me once if I'd take part in a variety show—on my own time. I said no. I guess I didn't have much of the Marine Corps spirit left. Then I got my orders to report back to North Carolina; I was going to be shipped overseas as a stevedore. That was the finish. I wrote a letter to the colonel asking if I could be shipped with my old outfit in the job I was trained for—as searchlight man on a 90-millimeter gun crew. I had a two-day leave and I went home to New York to wait for the colonel's answer. It didn't come. And I didn't report to camp. I stayed home for seventy days. I was in uniform when they picked me up. I wasn't trying to run away; I was just fed up. Sure, I know it was cockeyed wrong, but right then I didn't care."

Al looked moodily at the tip of his cigarette. "They gave me three years. It was commuted to eighteen months, and after I served one year in prison, I was recommended for clemency. I thought I'd have a chance to go back to duty. Other men did, even repeaters and those who'd been convicted of much worse things than me. I knew a guy in prison who was a draft board deserter, and *he* got a chance to square himself. But the three years I'd been in the service with a good record didn't count. It was out for me, out of the Marines, with a dishonorable discharge."

Al's eyes were bitter. "I guess they wanted to get rid of the colored Marines. The war was over, and they didn't have to bother with that crap about equality and democracy anymore. The faster they got rid of us, the better they liked it.

"So here I am," Al said, "with my

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d.d.—it might as well be t.b. School is a pipe-dream now. I wouldn't be admitted to the bar with a dishonorable discharge. I went to the railroad to try to get my old weekend job back, and they asked me for my discharge papers. I tried to enlist in the Army and Navy—no go. Hell, I'd go back and do anything if I could get rid of this stigma. What am I going to do? One guy I know threw his d.d. into the ashcan and grabbed the only work he could get—in the numbers racket with a little dope-peddling on the side. His kids have to eat, too, just like other kids."

"Well—what the hell do YOU want?"

I ASKED Catherine Overton what the United Negro and Allied Veterans were doing about the dishonorable discharge cases that came into their service department. She explained that there were several types of discharge other than honorable. The Army gives out a blue discharge, which is "without honor," and a yellow discharge, which is for major crimes—murder, arson, rape. The Navy, including the Marine Corps, issues a bad conduct discharge and a dishonorable discharge. What Peters got was a dishonorable discharge, although his offense was obviously not a major one.

"We're trying to cut the red tape and get reviews on these cases," Miss Overton said. "We have our lawyers working on them. There's been a great deal of protest ever since the war ended about the severity of court-martial sentences and the haphazard way in which the trials were conducted. In the case of Al Peters, for instance, the officer who conducted his defense was not a lawyer and knew practically nothing about courtmartial procedure. In pleading for clemency for Al, he gave as one argument the fact that this was his first case."

I questioned Miss Overton about the other kinds of cases she dealt with in her service department. Were they mostly the common run of veterans' problems?

She shook her head. "There's no such thing as common—each case is different. The basic reason why UNAVA was formed was that the Negro veteran has special problems. If he needs an apartment, he finds himself involved in lots of other things besides apartment hunting. He's forced to live in restricted parts of the city which have always been overcrowded; he has to pay higher rents and get worse service. Out in Chicago, we moved Negro veterans and their families into a housing project through what amounted to a battle line. I don't say that the other veterans' organizations aren't useful, but we start fighting where they leave off."

She was looking quickly through the papers on her desk, and took one out and handed it to me. "For instance, on the surface, this looks like a routine service case. It's about a former WAC who's trying to receive payment for a disability which she got while in service. But underneath there's another story—prejudice, tension and discrimination. The same old stuff.

"You remember the WAC recruiting slogan, don't you?" Miss Overton went on. "Relieve a soldier for active service." But what happened to a lot of Negro WACs was that they relieved civilians in menial jobs. They found themselves scrubbing woodwork and doing laundry. This girl, Laura Denton, was put to work in a hospital, and one of her jobs was pushing a heavy steam table around the wards. One day while she was pushing the table up an incline in the corridor, she sprained her back. She went to the medical officer, of course, and reported her condition. Well, along about this time, there was a great deal of unfavorable publicity in the newspapers about the way the Army was treating the Negro WACs. This particular medical officer was a Southerner, and to his mind the Negro girls were getting entirely too 'uppity.' When Laura came along with her sprained back, he ordered her to go right back to work. Right after Laura got out of the Army, her back began to bother her again, and she went to a doctor who told her that she couldn't work for quite a while. But since her injury was never put down on her Army record, she can't receive disability payment."

Walter Garland, the state executive officer for UNAVA, came over from his desk in time to hear the end of the story. He said it reminded him of an incident on Saipan. Stationed on the island was a Negro battalion in which every soldier became acutely ill with dysentery, but not one was allowed to report sick.

"The colonel didn't believe in Negroes being sick," Garland said. "I met a couple of those soldiers when I was in the Pacific. They looked as if they'd been through three wars."

While we were talking, Al Peters said goodby and left, but another man came in and approached Miss Overton's desk. He was young, he wore the familiar ruptured duck and he seemed a little nervous. Miss Overton introduced him as Henry Williams.

"Okay, we'll get going," she said to him. Then she turned to me. "I have to go down now to the State Employment Service. This man is a radio technician, but they're trying to reclassify him to lower-paying work. It's hard enough for Negroes to get skilled jobs without the State Employment Service pushing them down."

She shoved her papers into a desk drawer and added, "Maybe President Truman said hostilities were ended, but the war isn't over—not by a long shot. Just ask the Negro veterans."

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THE SOPHISTRY OF SARTRE: II

His solitary, "free" man is one who fights without hope of success and carries death within him.

By Y. FRID

This is the second and concluding installment of Mr. Frid's article, the first of which appeared last week.

TURNING to the themes of classical tragedy (the responsibility of the tragic hero, the tragic choice, the tragic guilt), Sartre understands them only in the spirit of Hamletism. But to Hamletism, also, he gives a decadent meaning—or rather, he renders it meaningless.

While he regards human beings as fatally disunited, inconstant and incorrigible, the slaves of impulses and momentary moods, fettered to "today," *bander-logs* with no sense of responsibility, Sartre tells them that they must each "make their choice" with nothing to guide them but their own "human subjectivity" and that they must serve a "human truth" which is changeable as a chameleon, each actuated by a feeling of responsibility and its offspring, "metaphysical" weariness. And since it is absurd to make guesses about the future and to hope that "imperfect" human beings will not tomorrow renounce their "today," Sartre tells them "*to act without hope of success.*" "There is no need to hope for success, in order to undertake something." This is not only the propaganda of adventurist action addressed to individualists. This "stoical" central thesis of Sartre's philosophy must also "give" an adventurist character to collective, progressive action. By undermining the faith of people in the cause they serve ("for who knows how it will turn out"), it necessarily comprises the idea that progressive activity is expedient, it necessarily compromises Marxism, the scientific theory of social development, in the eyes of Sartre's pupils who are interested in his phrases about the necessity of counting only on one's powers.

Solitary and "sovereign," without a past or a future, Sartre's man stands naked on a naked planet. Everything is "permitted to him," but he has sunk beneath the burden of his "useless and sterile freedom." There is nothing for him to do on the earth, but, while waiting wearily for the moment when he will return to nothingness, he is ready to use his "freedom" to the injury of mankind. "Anarchism," wrote Lenin, "is bourgeois individualism turned inside out. . . . Individualism . . . is the basis of the whole outlook of anarchism. . . . Anarchism is the child of despair." Looking at the work of Sartre, we see this "turning inside out" of bourgeois individualism, which at present is being turned more topsy-turvy than ever, in the hope of finding in the anarchist philosophy of despair a weapon against progressive ideology and in the attempt to disguise the nature of this philosophy by "humanist" phrases.

THE most subtle illustration of Sartre's philosophy is to be found in his long novel, *Reprieve*, the second volume of his trilogy, *Roads to Freedom*. The period covered by the novel is September 23 to 30, 1938, the days of Munich; and this period determines the theme of the novel. Sartre is an artist with no respect for people who have not attained the heights of existential metaphysics, though he often pities them, as a rich man pities the poor. At the same time, there are one or two passages in his book that are interesting. These are the passages where Sartre, member of the Resistance, for a short time gets the better of Sartre, the existentialist. The tragedy of a Czech family, Milan and Anna, who realize that their small country has been betrayed by Chamberlain and Daladier, is moving. Somewhat standing out from the other characters are the workers, of whom we get a glimpse, who are not afraid of Hitler's threats and are ready to fight the fascists, saying: "Has Hitler said that he is losing his patience? Well, we are losing ours also."

The night of the Munich betrayal is depicted with poignancy: Chamberlain, complacent and satisfied after his agreement with Hitler; the impatient Daladier; the doomed Jan Masaryk, despising them and seeing before him gangsters who have entered into a conspiracy with "the Fuehrer." This is where Sartre's lack of respect for human beings is fully justified. But these, together with a few more moving pages, are a spoonful of truth in a barrel of falsehood.

The world is on the eve of doomsday; this is the general impression we get from the picture sweepingly sketched by Sartre. Wherever his characters are found—in Marrakesh, in the African desert, in Spain, in the fire of the first anti-fascist war, in Paris, in Marseilles, in Laon, in Biarritz—everywhere they are in a wilderness that is naked and dead under a low, black sun. Everywhere they are in a blind alley, on the eve of doom. They are almost all solitary, desolate, doomed to a cruelly senseless existence, pathologically inert or afflicted with a convulsive twitch—nearer to non-existence than to existence. Typical of this nightmare atmosphere is the symbolic figure of a simple man — the shepherd, Gros-Louis, a helpless giant with the mind and heart of an eight-year-old child, who has come for the first time to a large town and complains that in this wilderness he has met only one person, a Negro, who has seen a man in him. But he has lost the Negro and cannot find him again. "They are all the same," says Gros-Louis. Gros-Louis is a symbolical figure. But the other characters also are represented as someone's nightmare, as a swarm of sluggishly floundering bodies, mutually connected only by their coexistence in time and space, like some thick, sticky, fermenting mash.

This characterization of "imperfect human beings" is reinforced by the construction of the novel. It consists of a quantity of close-ups of varying size, mixed up in disorder and taking regard only of the synchronism of what is happening. These close-ups overflow into one another, so that very often the Paris close-ups are not sep-

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arated from the Marseilles or Morocco close-ups by a paragraph or a period, but by a semi-colon, a comma or by the conjunction "and" (although in essence they are not connected by anything at all). This non-logical method of construction is an appropriate reflection of the absence of causality in the world.

The chief character of the novel, Mathieu Delarne, a professor of philosophy (a "Cartesian"), makes sand-pies on the beach. "There's a fine pie," he says; "it stands, surrounded by the air, without support and it does not crumble to pieces." While admiring his pie, Mathieu destroys it. That is how, according to Sartre, each *banderlog* should rise from the thick, sticky mass of which he is a minute part, and become a man—a solitary "stoic," standing up "in the air without support" (and, in essence, no more solid than a sand-pie). This "metaphysical" side of the novel is without interest and entirely abstract, although Mathieu has begun his search for freedom in the first volume of the trilogy (*The Age of Reason*) by taking the concrete step of freeing himself from a love affair which has become a burden to him. In the second volume he discovers that freedom is himself, but that this freedom is unprofitable and that he has no respect for himself. In the third volume, which has not yet appeared, he will probably, in accordance with Sartre's philosophy, discover "full" freedom by realizing that from a sense of responsibility and integrity he must begin to act stoically and without hope of success, serving what he regards in the third volume as "human truth."

More interesting than this is something else. The struggle of the Spanish anti-fascists is to Sartre an example of "action without hope of success." Failing to observe the faith of the Republicans in the final victory of their cause, Sartre turns a heroic tragedy into a tragedy of the doom that befalls "idealist adventures." It is hardly surprising that in the Republican General Gomez, who fights without hope, there are adventurist and "brutal" traits. Gomez has "made his choice." He has found himself and is free. But he is, first and foremost, an "ex-artist" who has become a professional soldier. He is not concerned with ideas and ideals. He makes his confession to Mathieu, saying in a simple, "soldierly" way: "War is fine. . . . I love war." Of the soldiers who have been killed in battle he says: "I am not sorry about them."

And the other "anti-fascist," Mathieu, echoes this sentiment. To his brother, a Munichite, who calls for the avoidance of human bloodshed, Mathieu replies: "War or peace, it is all the same for mankind. For people carry their death in themselves from the very day of their birth," and humanity will continue to be itself, even if it perishes in millions. And so the Munichites and pro-fascists are humane; human life is dear to them, and the anti-fascists, with the callous indifference of "idealist adventurers," sacrifice concrete human beings to the "abstract" and sterile ideas of "country," humanity and justice. This idea is typical of contemporary individualism.

The life of the "concrete human beings" in the novel is dominated by its central theme, the conversations of Chamberlain and Daladier with Hitler. Day and night, practically every character in the novel is thinking: "If only war can be avoided!" The climax of the novel is Hitler's Stuttgart speech. This is the point to which the various threads of the novel all lead. And here we see "everyone" waiting by their radio sets, "everyone" waiting for Hitler's words, "as for manna from heaven." The hollow roar in the meeting hall is heard, "the roar of the

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sea." "He raised his hand and the sea was still." He begins to speak and his voice no longer belongs to him; it has become international. And millions of "imperfect" human beings, pitiful *bander-logs*, hold their breath by their radio sets, spellbound by the cold gaze of the python, Kaa. The construction of the novel raises Hitler to a pedestal. The fascist mass-murderer with the face of a shopkeeper is the judge on this day of judgment. The human race is insignificant, Sartre tells his reader, and it therefore gets its deserts. It is not surprising that Hitler is in fact the central figure of the novel, for he alone has "made his choice" and is acting as an adventurer. Here between the lines of the novel we catch a glimpse of the satisfied smile of Sartre's master, Heidegger, philosopher of Hitler Germany.

THE social function of what Sartre has written can only be that of a peculiar "Trojan horse" left by reaction in the camp of the progressive forces. At present reaction most urgently needs a subtle, sophistical "philosophy" which may help to infect a number of people, who are dreaming about justice and a better life, with disbelief in their own powers, indifference to progressive ideas, lack of faith in a progressive party, doubts as to the fruitfulness of the collective efforts of the working people and all progressive humanity, with defeatist words and illusions that nothing is possible but adventurist action which is doomed to failure. Many writers are giving expression to aspects of this "philosophy" — for example, R. Latham, whose lectures were given in a workers' college (he tried to penetrate more deeply than Sartre into the masses of the people). If Sartre had not evolved his "philosophical" system, someone else would have done so. But all such "philosophies" will certainly be vanquished in the struggle with the real philosophy of Marxism.

Translated by M. N. Roy.

The "Exodus" and the Doctrine

An Editorial

LET us be quick and to the point. American officialdom stands drenched with guilt for its studied failure to bring even a small measure of aid to the Jews of the *Exodus*. Their cry for help has gone unheeded and a cruel game of pretense is being played in Washington where the acting Secretary of State, Robert Lovett, claims not to have the facts. Who can be fooled by such brutal nonsense? Some fifty days have rushed by since the human cargo was turned from its course and sent back to the land from which it sought escape. The newspapers have told the story again and again; the President has received tear-laden appeals; the Jewish community in Palestine has uttered loud its protest. But a polished gentleman in his air-cooled chamber says he is uninformed, that he does not know what can be done until the record is before him. The 4,400 facts aboard three British transports mean nothing.

We cannot be surprised by this indifference, this callousness. It issues from a larger political tragedy—many call it the Truman Doctrine—in which a drop of oil is worth infinitely more than a drop of blood. To be sure Mr. Lovett will see to it that when they disembark in Hamburg, if ever they do, the Jews will be treated pleasantly. But no pleasantness can erase from their memories the death chambers of the Hamburg area. Nor can it remove the mounds under which their kin lie murdered. Mr. Lovett may even urge the French to take over the dirty work of the British foreign office and allow these Jews into France. All this again will be evasion, for short of the American government demanding that Palestine be opened to those Jews who wish to go there, and especially to the displaced persons, Washington will stand condemned as a participant in a monstrous crime.

In the meantime the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine has finished its work. We go to press before its recommendations to the forthcoming meeting of the Assembly have been announced. Yet this we know: any report which does not predicate its thinking on Arab-Jewish unity and the eviction of the British from the country will be a farce. To split Palestine into compartments on the ground that the Arabs will not live with Jews is to prolong such antagonisms as do exist and to close the door on their elimination in the future. The charge that the Arabs are inherently opposed to such unity confuses the mentality of Arabian feudal lords with the deepest aspirations of the Arab masses. The antagonisms that are present can be traced to the support which the British, and the Americans, have given the most backward elements in the Arab world. Remove that support and Arabs and Jews will in largest part be free to harmonize their interests as they have done on several occasions in the recent past.

It is absurd to call this position and the concept of a dual state rooted in equality of Jews and Arabs "doctrinaire Marxism." It is not the Marxists alone who hold to those ideas. Many non-Communists believe in them, notably Dr. Magnes, leader of Palestine's Ichud organization, and the "Hashomer Hatzair" (the left-wing of the Zionist-Labor group). The doctrinaires are actually those who have become the tail of the British imperialist kite, the bitter-enders in the Zionist movement. And with the doctrine of unsolvable Arab-Jewish hostility no problem whatever can be solved—neither problems of economy and immigration nor of the liberation of the country from British rule. With unity as a basic and unalterable principle solutions become possible.

Partition *as conceived by London or Washington* and now being spread under the label of "confederation" will result in nothing but the creation of an armed camp, with the British holding the balance of power while American oil companies hold the final power. The entire Middle East, under these circumstances, becomes a cockpit of struggle more intense and more menacing than anything we have seen heretofore. No one can exclude the possibility of partition in the event that it is the only way to arrive at a compromise. But partition must mean the expulsion of all imperialisms, of the British armed forces and the British governmental apparatus. In this context partition will take on a different meaning, for Jews and Arabs will have then overcome the central obstacle that has blocked their rights to statehood.

JOHN STUART.

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mail call

Request from Stockholm

To New Masses: First of all I want to wish you good luck in your effort to overcome the financial crisis you seem to have got in. You must succeed! New Masses is now needed more than ever to lead all progressive Americans in their struggle against the reactionary and imperialistic forces which try to give the US over to fascism and to show the rest of the world that there is another America than that which gave the suffering mankind the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. There appears so little about that other America in our big dailies here in Sweden. We know it exists. We know that they can't have crushed and killed the America of Jefferson, Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Yet we can't help to get shocked and curious when we read about the Taft-Hartley bill, The Un-American Committee, the Ku Klux Klan, etc. To see the American situation clearly from this corner of the world is really not easy. But one thing you can see even from here and that is that New Masses, the voice of the progressive America, never must be silenced.

I am a rather new subscriber to NM. In fact I didn't know of its existence until a few years ago, when I read about it in Joseph Freeman's book, *An American Testament*. I studied NM for the first time in our public library here. Now I get it in my own mail-box, most irregularly of course, but I get it. And when it comes I know I will have an interesting evening reading it.

But this is not the only reason I'm writing to you. I would like to find some girl who would be willing to exchange letters with me. My English is not so good, as you must have noticed already, but I think I would be able to improve it in corresponding with some American girl. And furthermore I think it would be very interesting to get in contact with radical youth in America.

Here are some facts about myself: I am twenty-two years old. I am a graduate from a Swedish girls' school (something between high school and college). I have never been able to go to the university. At present I am employed at a criminal technical institute here in Stockholm. I am doing fairly well, I get my salary, I don't starve, I can go to the movies (and see bad Hollywood productions). I can buy clothes, a few at least, and so on. But nevertheless I am not content. My brain, my soul, if I have one, my whole burning inside body is starving for something to do. To be a good typist is just not my dream.

I want to write. Not a novel, oh no! Just one little, tiny story. But I can't. I know I can't. And so I am nervous, burning and starving.

Well, I am immensely interested in everything about writing and writers. No T. S. Eliot for me but Dreiser, Lewis and Howard Fast.

But besides literature I would be interested to discuss: the progressive movements in the US, the labor movement, the radical movements among university students, among the American youth on the whole, the resemblances and differences between American and Swedish society, between our daily lives. (This would be enough for some letters, wouldn't it?)

I am not a university student myself as I have already stated, but I would like to correspond with some American coed, if possible.

Maj Stenstrom.

Karlbergsvagen 60
Stockholm, Sweden.

Correction

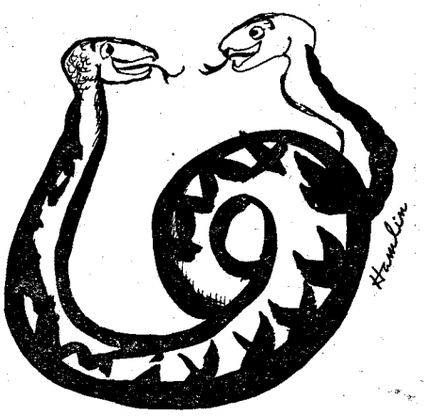
To New Masses: I read with interest your editorial "The Ivy Curtain" in the August 12 NM on the logjam in our colleges. Your articles on students and their problems are much appreciated here at the University of Wisconsin and we hope to have more of them. However, though your point is well taken that we have much to learn from the Soviet Union in the field of education, your statement that the Soviet Union provides free higher education and living costs to university students is inaccurate. This was true up to 1940. However, at that time tuition was introduced into all but the first seven grades, which are free and compulsory. This means that education in the last three years of the ten-year school (which are equivalent to our high school) and in colleges must be paid for, but the exceptions to this rule are such that in actual practice the majority of students still pay nothing. Among the exceptions are: students with excellent marks; returning veterans and Partisans; orphans of veterans and Partisans, and students from certain undeveloped areas whom the government seeks to aid (much as it gives disproportionate support to industries of those areas) in order to bring those regions up to the general level. All these categories get monthly stipends covering their living costs as well as tuition. Other students must be helped by their parents, as here. However, Soviet tuition is proportionately lower than ours.

These changes were introduced for two reasons: (1) to raise school discipline and marks and stop the wasteful transferring by some students from school to school, and (2) to cope with the serious labor shortage. A Labor Reserves Decree was promulgated at the same time to channel students into trades. Three types of trade schools were established: two provide six-month courses and the other a two-year course. Tuition is free and the students' work in industry is paid for at the usual rates.

The objectives of a greater labor force and higher marks and discipline were attained. The number of university students has not decreased since 1940, but neither has it shot up as it would have otherwise. Of course the war interfered with progress in education as in every other field, but the likelihood is that these curbs are temporary and will no longer be necessary when further mechanization of industry and agriculture makes the labor shortage less acute.

E. M.

Madison, Wis.



"Riesel!"
"Westbrook!"

Info on Boas

To New Masses: I am gathering material toward a life of the scientist Franz Boas, and I shall be glad to hear from any of your readers who knew him or have any writings of his. Please address any information you may have for me care of Doubleday & Company, Inc., 14 West 49 Street, New York 20, N. Y. Thank you.

Muriel Rukeyser.

Want Some?

To New Masses: Do you know any person or organization interested in back issues of NM? I have an accumulation of over a year's copies which I hate to throw out but also have no place to store.

L. H.

New York.

Anyone interested may write this department, which will forward the request to L. H.—The Editors.

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review and comment

WHITE FLAG

Chester Himes' banner is more than a symbol of surrender—under it he joins his people's foes.

By LLOYD L. BROWN

LONELY CRUSADE, *by Chester Himes. Knopf. $3.*

CHESTER HIMES was one of the authors discussed by Theodore Ward in his illuminating critique of contemporary Negro fiction published in *Mainstream*, Winter, 1947. In that article, "Five Negro Novelists: Revolt and Retreat," Mr. Ward examined one trend in which "hope is being abandoned and replaced by a spirit of defeat." But where the critic found evidence of this defeatist current reflected, though not apparent at first sight, in Mr. Himes' first novel, *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, there is no mistaking the white flag under which this author boldly marches backward in *Lonely Crusade*.

This book is remarkable in several ways. I cannot recall ever having read a worse book on the Negro theme. This may seem a sweeping statement about one book in a country where so much of literature has been polluted by racist poison. It may seem even more incredible since the author is himself a Negro. But those who have observed the phenomenon of renegacy in other fields may understand.

More significant is the fact that in *Lonely Crusade* can be seen the full flowering of the Myrdal-Wright thesis on the Negro question which has had such a wide influence in recent years, a viewpoint which has been doubly insidious because of its liberal trappings. In *An American Dilemma*, the philosophic bible of this school, Gunnar Myrdal found that "The American Negro problem is a problem in the heart of the American. It is there that the interracial tension has its focus." Richard Wright and his followers supplement this anti-materialist distortion with the thesis that Bigger Thomas images the basic character of the Negro people in America.

Horace R. Cayton, author and journalist, who is one of the most energetic apostles of the Myrdal-Wright doctrine, recently declared: "I am convinced that at the core of the Negro's mentality there is a fear-hate-fear complex."* (The Negro's fear of the white man creates within him a feeling of hate which produces a sense of guilt which in turn results in an intensified and compounded fear.) "It is this vicious cycle," Mr. Cayton concludes, "in which the American Negro is caught and in which his personality is pulverized by an ever-mounting, self-propelling rocket of emotional conflict." To illustrate his thesis this writer quotes liberally from Himes' first novel, as well as from several works of Wright.

For the devotees of this ultra-modern version of the ancient myth of the Scared Negro, as well as for the unreconstructed adherents of the old tobacco-chewin', red-gallus brand of white supremacy, Mr. Himes' new book has much to offer. His hero twists and turns in fear from page four of the first chapter ("He was afraid . . .") to page 383 in the last chapter ("I'm still afraid . . ."). So hard does the author ride this emotion that he runs out of new ways to describe his protagonist's torment. Thus on page 318 fear is "paralyzing his vocal cords . . ." and on the facing page "fear had paralyzed his vocal cords . . ."

In their jacket blurb the publishers describe *Lonely Crusade* as "picturing directly the fear that . . . underlies every thought and emotion of the Negro and distorts every human relationship he may have, whether with other Negroes or with whites."

If Himes did only that we could dismiss his new book as being merely another redrawing of the "liberal" caricature, a bid for best-seller cash by author and publisher following a tried-and-tested pattern. But along this fearful way the writer does much more—and much worse. And I do not see how those liberals who have been beguiled by the Myrdal-Wright school, including men like Horace Cayton, who proclaim their partisanship in the Negro's fight for liberation, can march with Himes in his crusade. Certainly it is not too much to ask them now to reexamine the roots of their philosophy from which has blossomed this strange fruit—this literary lynching.

THE Bigger Thomas of this book is named Lee Gordon. He is a college graduate hired as a union organizer in wartime Los Angeles. The union is engaged in a drive to organize an aircraft plant which has among its employes a considerable number of Negro workers. Communists, both within the union and outside, are helping out in the drive. This factor makes it possible for Himes to add another "popular" highlight to his book: Red-baiting. Lee Gordon's fear-complex is matched by a relentless and bitter hatred of Communists and this be-

* THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO RACE RELATIONS, *by Horace R. Cayton. Reed College Bulletin, Vol. 25, No. 1.*

Our own contributing editor Anton Refregier will be the instructor in three classes offered this fall at the California Labor School, 240 Golden Gate in San Francisco. Ref, whose work appears in the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art as well as on various hotel, post-office and night-club walls and in NM, will conduct fifteen-week courses in drawing, painting and mural painting, beginning September 8. In addition, the school offers many other courses on various subjects. If you're on the West Coast, look into it.

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comes the second rail of the track along which the story moves.

But to me the most criminal perversion of this book is Himes' characterization of the Negroes. Where Ward, in the above-mentioned review, found that Himes' "method of character description [of Negroes] bears the imprint of petty bourgeois snobbery and contempt for the masses" it is difficult to describe adequately the further degeneration of that method in *Lonely Crusade*. It will be enough to quote Himes on this score for the fair-minded reader to draw his own conclusion. The following passage is a description of Luther McGregor, a Negro Communist whom Gordon meets on his first day as union organizer:

Before him stood a man who normally looked dangerous. Fully as tall as Lee, his six-foot height was lost in the thickness of his torso and the width of muscular shoulders that sloped like an ape's, from which hung arms a good foot longer than the average man's. His weird, long-fingered hands of enormous size and grotesque shape, decked with several rings, hung placidly at his side, and his flat, splayed feet seemed comfortably planted in the mud. He wore a belted, light-tan, camel's hair overcoat over a white, turtle-neck sweater, above which his flat-featured, African face seemed blacker than the usual connotation of the word. On the left cheek a puffed bluish scar, with ridges pronging off from it in spokes, was a memento of a pickax duel on a Southern chain gang; and the man who gave him the razor welt, obliquely parting his kinky hair, he always said was dead. He surveyed Lee without emotion through slanting eyes as yellow as muddy water.

Truly a performance that would have brought an appreciative grin to the rotted mouth of the dying Bilbo!

There's much more about this fantastic "Negro Communist" who is one of the book's central characters. We meet him again at the home of Mollie, his "white woman." The wife of a rich movie producer, Mollie is a sex-fiend who "keeps" Luther for fun.

Kicking a sofa to one side, Luther crossed the room and stacked Sibelius' First Symphony on the record player. Against the symphonic music, he was grotesque, with his long, black, muscle-roped arms swinging from the white, T-shirted, convex slope of his shoulders like an ape's. The impulse to laugh welled up in Lee but Luther's appearance of absorption in the music quelled it.

"You like that?" Lee asked.

"I likes it," Luther replied solemnly. "No culture too high for the proletariat."

And then after vodka cocktails are drunk "To FDR!" and "To Joe Stalin!" Mollie gets ready for Luther:

Sitting erect, she took the pins from her hair, plied her fingers through it, and let it cascade about her neck and shoulders. Then she cooed: "Come to me, my intellectual Caliban, my strong black apostle with the pygmy brain; come to me and make love to me, my dark, designing commissar."

How can the Book of the Month Club resist it?

The self-hate and shameless abasement of Chester Himes, who panders to every depraved element of white chauvinism, is based upon his complete acceptance of white ruling-class ideology. Thus on page 62 we read: "What Lee rejected was not the truth of the knowledge of Negroes' inferiority, for this he was learning on each succeeding day, but its value."

With the phrase on the jacket: "This book also gives a new picture of the relations of Negroes and Jews," the publisher coyly braces the reader for the anti-Semitism which is smeared through these pages. One example might be given. "The self-styled Marxists of Los Angeles were having their hour"—a convivial orgy of drink and sex—when the talk turns to the Second Front question:

Another Jew joined the conversation: "Russia must be saved!"

"For who? You Jews?" Lee asked harshly.

Now for the Communists. Word spreads among the workers in the factory that one of the union organizers had sold out to the employer. The union's drive is slowed by the resulting demoralization. Luther is the guilty one and he admits it to Bart, "West Coast Chairman of the Communist Party." Bart, too, is a Negro—"he had coal-black, African features and a longish head as smooth as a billiard ball." This dialogue follows after Luther tells his party leader that he has taken $500 from the factory owner:

"Luther, confound it! What did you do that for?"

"Hell! the son of a bitch stopped me one day as I was going out to help Lee at the gates and ast me how much I wanted to double-cross the union and I said five hundred, thinking that'd discourage him. So he pulls out his wallet and hands me five C notes. What else could I do? It was like finding money in the street."

"Luther, you are an incorrigible thief,"

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Bart reprimanded, but there was a twinkle in his usually cold eyes. "Did you tell anyone else?"

"No."

What follows is straight out of Koestler.

Although Bart, whom his comrades fawned upon "with a deference only befitting a district commissar," was a "good Marxist" he was sorely troubled. He knew what must be done even before he received the directive from his party's national committee to kill the rumors about betrayal and to issue a memorandum proclaiming Luther's innocence. The stool-pigeon was an "indispensable" man to the party. "What made him so valuable to a revolutionary movement was his simple antagonism toward authority and his deep vicious hatred of white people." And Bart knew that to Marxists law, morality, religion, ethics, integrity, were mere bourgeois prejudices. After much soul-burning and wrestling with his conscience about right and wrong, vice and virtue, Bart hewed to the line of "materialistic reality." He called a meeting of the state committee, read the "directive" and announced that a "sacrifice" must be made. The Communists' decision was to frame one of their own members, one Jackie Forks, "expose" her on the floor of the union and expel her from the union and the party. She was dispensable. Not only was the innocent victim white—"fair, Aryan, and a pure-blooded gentile"—but she was bed-mate to Gordon in one of his extra-marital affairs. This naturally made Gordon hate the Communists all the more—if such were possible. There's much more like this before the hero comes to his inevitable doom to end the book.

To decry the level to which American publishers have sunk that they can offer such unmitigated trash to the public, or to deplore the abysmal corruption of a young Negro writer, is not enough. Nor is it enough to say that this is a book which no decent person would touch with a ten-foot pole. It seems to me that here is a challenge to all progressives—to Communists and non-Communists, to Jews and to my own people, the Negro people, to all who stand for democracy and against fascism.

The challenge is the same as that which is being made by the current revival of *Birth of a Nation*—the spreading of racist poison, the fostering of hate against the Negro people, against the Jews, as essential components of the social, cultural and political life in the "American Century." The issuance of this book ought to be met with more than passive anger, more than contempt. It should call for action. It should be buried deep beneath a rising mountain of protest, boycott and condemnation.

Let Chester Himes go his miserable way, but let him go alone on his lonely crusade, accompanied only by the ghosts of Uncle Tom and the nameless wretched slave who betrayed Nat Turner and his people.

Why Not Be Sensible?

THE STEEPER CLIFF, *by David Davidson. Random House. $3.*

On the jacket *The Steeper Cliff* is called "a romantic novel of one man's search for the meaning of courage." And it is true: the novel is romantic. Lieutenant Andrew Cooper, a young military occupation officer whose task it is to find anti-Nazi journalists to fit the gradually less demanding standards of the "manual," is the dashing hero of adventure and love. With all his inward suffering on the meaning of courage, his misgivings and oracular denunciations of Dachau and Auschwitz, he is the Philip Marlowe type: out on a search for an elusive German, Adam Lorenz.

The author, who was himself a civilian specialist in Bavaria with our military government, handles the materials of occupation with an adept hand insofar as he sees those materials. But he allows his own distorted fears to color his quest for values. The problem of German guilt has led him to a reexamination of the subtleties of an individual's courage. Living in 1947, he did not have to write another *Red Badge of Courage* to prove that man is afraid in battle. In this war soldiers had no need to feel shame because they were frightened. Everyone admitted his fears. Courage today has a different meaning—it is not the absence of fear. Courage today means resistance, resistance to Nazis and fascists, to oppressors everywhere. And David Davidson wants to learn the nature of the "authentic hero," the man who in the face of death, torture, starvation and paler insecurity will stand up to protect the innate rights of man.

Andrew Cooper is an ordinary American, one who has grown up on the tenets of democracy without realizing their true fighting meanings. Sudden-

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ly, as an occupation officer, he becomes the conqueror. Suddenly because a German had joined the Nazi party Cooper finds he must deny him a job, take away his livelihood, cause his arrest, lead him perhaps to his death or suicide.

And he is faced with the question—would I who in my youth never fought back even children's gangs, who always was afraid of the "cliff"—"high places . . . fists . . . third rails . . . commanding officers . . . afraid to die, of anything that might cause me to die"—would I defy the bullies, the bestial authorities? Or would I not have submitted and joined their insidious organizations—on paper? Cooper knows that were he to have done so, he would have given approval to Belsen, Dachau, Auschwitz. Yet would he have had the stamina to be an "authentic hero"? Or, he asks, are not fanatics, "anarchists" and religionists the only real heroes?

To discover what he would have done Cooper finds himself a German alter ego, Adam Lorenz, a man of his own age who also was a journalist, who also had more brain than muscle. Lorenz too appeared to act boldly only because he was perversely afraid; once in the extremity of fear he had defied the Brownshirt bullies who were barbarously assaulting a Jew. Lorenz landed in Dachau for this, and Cooper searches for him now to discover whether his German counterpart continued to have "courage" in the face of his experiences there. What did the "concentrationary universe" (as Rousset in a powerful little book, *The Other Kingdom*, has recently put it) do to Lorenz' "courage"? Was he like the only "authentic" hero Cooper encounters, Karl Schwimmer, who never submitted? Or, since his courage stemmed from fear and presumably not from "fanatic" belief, was he like the "sensible" people, like Lieutenant Cooper, "half a coward and half a hero"? In discovering that Lorenz once relented to the Nazis out of sheer physical fright and weakness, Davidson concludes that only fanatics resist; sensible people submit. Since he implies that the "sensible" Germans were in the majority, he actually exonerates most Germans from guilt. In cold essence, he gives an excuse for the treachery of Munich, the murder of Stalingrad and Lidice, the gas chambers and crematoriums. By implication he provides a rationalization for "sensible" exploitation by the Dutch, British and American imperialists.

Now why does Davidson, who believes in justice and human welfare, come to such a reactionary conclusion? Davidson admits he is a "Social Democrat" and as such he is looking only for "brave, decent intentions," not the "muscles" that will carry them out. Already we see that his reactionary conclusions are therefore not peculiar. But this admission goes deeper. It indicates that his wholesale exoneration stems from his desire to hide behind some moral smokescreen in these critical times. The loyalty tests and their logical equivalents, the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, are biting into the consciousness of every American, and certain intellectuals who see them as pernicious evidence that an American terror is dangerously imminent are already brooding on their own inaction and present appeasement, already turning to sophistries to discover some justification for their refusal to fight against these feelers of American fascism.

So Davidson turns to Germany in his determination to absolve himself from responsibility in the American fight, and he finds to his satisfaction that the average German did not have the moral or physical stamina to fight the Nazis.

It is true that the Germans, led by the insidious clique of bankers and capitalists, accepted Nazism as the answer to their insecurities and fears. They were indeed politically unprepared to see that Nazism actually intensified their problems, that actually they were committing individual, national and international murder. It is also true that because of the manifold forms of humiliating deprivations and bestialities, the difficulties of fighting terror demanded a kind of courage the majority of the German people, because of their political and historical situation, lacked. The exoneration of the individual German therefore cannot be a categorical question—it is qualified politically and historically. To say, in other words, that the average German who could not endure the inhuman hardships that resistance demanded is as guilty as the industrialist, who consciously profited from concentration-camp tactics, is certainly misstating the case.

But Davidson is out to exonerate the Germans completely. He wants to forget that every German in accepting Nazism became responsible to a greater or lesser degree. That there are unequal degrees of responsibility does not absolve any German from responsi-

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bility. Partial responsibility is still responsibility.

Davidson is really not interested in how the conqueror should punish the conquered. He merely wants to set up a morality that will absolve him from responsibility in America right now or free him from committing acts of "heroism" in the future. He therefore evolves a kind of moral equation: courage equals the ability "to live within one's means," or, to put it bluntly, the ability to preserve oneself. What Davidson is saying is that men need have no morals whatsoever. He is denying that man is a moral animal —and asserting that he is just an animal. He is setting up a morality that is non-human. But, as Marx has said, "We repudiate all morality derived from non-human and non-class concepts. We say that it is a deception, a fraud, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of landlords and capitalists." What Davidson is doing then is substituting a corrupted ideal for one that would fulfill the concrete needs of actual men in the critical year of 1947. In Davidson's desperate attempt to exonerate himself he justifies the Germans' abrogation of one of the progressive elements in earlier bourgeois morality itself: the emphasis on the courage to resist tyranny. Like the bourgeoise, he renounces the values which it had championed in its youth, in its struggles against feudal oppression.

This is not then a story of one man's search for the meaning of courage; it is a story of one man's search for the vindication of the Social-Democratic attitude of appeasement. All Davidson now wants to do is to live out his personal life heralding a presumably imminent doom.

HARRIET HAMBARIN.

THEATER

"ON STAGE," the vital experimental group at the Cherry Lane Theater, follows its fine production of Auden and Isherwood's *The Dog Beneath the Skin* with a well-staged and well-performed production of the German playwright Georg Kaiser's expressionist drama *Gas*. It was interesting to see the two dramas in sequence for they illustrate, in quite a remarkable way, fundamentals of the symbol technique.

Isherwood spent a number of years in Germany and might have been influenced by its expressionist playwrights. I put it thus conditionally because the character of his work, in its slyness and indirection and wistfulness, is markedly alien to the loud, unsubtle, obtrusive and almost diagrammed symbolism of the Germans. In Auden the differences are even greater. If, therefore, the influence upon Auden and Isherwood of the German expressionists was endured on one level, it must have been resisted on another.

On the surface the resemblances between the two plays are striking. Both ignore the demands of literal realism. Both choose to symbolize rather than to characterize. Both make use of formal, unrealistic oration—such as the choruses in *The Dog* and the symbol speeches in *Gas*, where the characters speak not as persons but as personifications: The Mother, The Husband, The Engineer, The Businessman, The Cabinet Minister, etc.

Below the surface the resemblances vanish. Actually *Gas* is further from *The Dog* than from the ordinary Broadway type play. *Gas* offers in pre-cast moulds some stereotypes that Broadway has shaped by long use. The differences between *The Dog* and *Gas* are most clearly seen in the direction and human content of their symbols. In *The Dog* the symbols develop naturally, spontaneously and seemingly effortlessly from the play, and without injury to the personalities of the characters, who, indeed, seem rather to enjoy the dressing up. It is a case of form arising from the content. But the symbols in *Gas* are abstractions imposed upon the characters and crush out their personalities.

For example, Francis Crewe in *The Dog*, when reduced to an animal, becomes a very human animal. And when Right Leg and Left Leg argue, their legness fades away. They argue as human beings; they *are* human beings. But when Kaiser's men become machines, they become all machine; when they become muscles, they become all muscle. It is as grotesquely simple-minded as that.

Symbolism so dehumanized wakes no response. As a result, *Gas* was as boring as *The Dog* was exhilarating. However, the books on modern drama treat Kaiser with great respect and rate *Gas* as his best play. How can the "best" play of an expressionist "master" be so disappointing?

One answer, of course, is implied in the quite complete disappearance of

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expressionism as a force in the theater. Its depersonalized characterization made it unusable on the modern stage after the sheer sensation value of its novelties wore off.

Other answers are to be found in the social context of the play, its special place and time. *Gas* was first performed in 1910. It is full of production devices such as Max Reinhardt had made fashionable. But some forty years have gone by and the surprises no longer startle. In the "advanced" thinking of the German intelligentsia of 1910, industry was the monster that deformed men. Kaiser and similar thinkers called for a mass desertion of the machines and a return to the soil. But a trip to the countryside and a close look at the peasant would have shown the man at the plow to be as mutilated as the man at the machine. Not the machine or the plow, but the exploitation of the man at the machine and at the plow did the mutilating. That the German intelligentsia, some sixty years after the founding of Marxian socialism among them, could dither so over an anti-machine manifesto, symbolic or otherwise, is symptomatic of later morbidities.

The best that can be said for *Gas* today is that it documents the anxiety of German intellectuals in the years when the Kaiser and his Krupps were making it easy for the "accident" of war to occur. They saw the connection between militarism and a carteleer industry that calculated the profits of destruction. And, in fact, the best scenes in the play are those in which carteleers and their minister in the government put pressure on the realist-idealist to resume the production of gas despite its previous destructive explosion and the probability of a later and greater disaster. There is reality in those symbols and the reality gives them a certain grim humanity. But with that scene done the play returns to its dehumanized symbols and its foolish message.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

RECORDS

A BATCH of new recordings illustrate interestingly the progressive stages of a national music. Tschaikowsky's First Symphony, "Winter Memories," is of a comparatively primitive stage, abounding in the most engaging folk melodies, but doing little with them in the way of emotional development or musical construction. The fine performance and recording is by the Santa Monica Orchestra under Rachmilovich (Disc SR 102). Rachmaninoff, however, in his Symphony "The Bells," for orchestra with voices, uses the tradition of Russian folk and choral music in a most imaginative way. The result is a set of four glowing tone poems of Russian life, full of surprises in timbre and harmony, and the best work of this composer on records. The same orchestra performs, with the choir and soloists of the First Methodist Church of Hollywood (Disc 804).

Prokofieff, for all his modern harmony, is wholly in the line of a Russian national art, as his Suite No. 2 from the ballet "Romeo and Juliet" proves convincingly. Typically Russian phrases form the basis for searching portrayals of human emotion in a framework of the most vivid color. Koussevitzky and the Boston Orchestra give an impassioned, well-recorded reading of four movements (RCA Victor 1129).

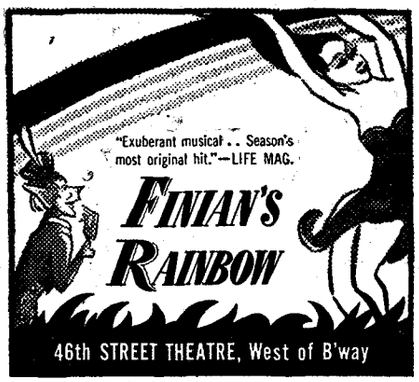
A complete "La Traviata" recorded in Rome displays very special qualities. It has a dramatic unity and punch which reveals that to the Italian people opera is a national theater as well as a national music. The singers are alive to every nuance of the words and Verdi's music. The voices are good, though not first-rate. The soprano Adriana Guerrini especially, in the difficult title role, forces a normally beautiful voice to the point where she cannot control its timbre. The recording is life-like (Columbia OP 25).

The Dvorak First Symphony, in D Major, takes us back to an undeveloped form of folk-inspired poetry, very delightful but too long for its emotional content. Leinsdorf leads the Cleveland Orchestra in a lively, musicianly reading (Columbia 687).

We also have three stages of jazz, starting with the classic style of Sister Ernestine Washington singing hymn tunes in a ringing voice reminiscent of Ma Rainey, with Bunk Johnson's band playing fine, straightforward jazz obbligato (Disc 712). An album of Louis Armstrong records, made in Paris in 1934, show him no longer playing in contrapuntal blues style, but with an exuberance and rich fund of musical ideas that, both in serious mood and clowning, silences criticism (Vox VSP 300). Excerpts from a jam session feature the late guitarist Charlie Christian and the trumpet of Joe Guy. It is modern jazz close to its best, thin in its emphasis on the solo melodic line, but full of subtle, ironic and witty musical surprises (Vox VSP 302).

"Boogie Woogie, Vol. 2" offers through reissues a history of blues piano, close to its best, starting with the almost spoken blues of Charles Spand's "Hastings Street" and going through major work by Meade Lux Lewis, Jim Yancey, Mary Lou Williams and the two Johnsons, Pete and James P. It belongs in every record library (Columbia C 130). The ironic wit, sentiment and dizzy virtuosity of modern jazz, played by varied groups, may be found in Esquire's "All American Hot Jazz" (Victor HJ 10).

S. FINKELSTEIN.



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